Kandahā Inscription of King Narasiṃhadeva of Mithilā [Oinwār Dynasty[1]], dated S. 1357 (1435 A.D.)

By K. P. Jayaswal.

Importance of the inscription

This is the first inscription of the Oinwār dynasty of Mithilā, which is also called the Kāmeśvara dynasty. The king Narasiṃhadeva was a contemporary of the poet Vidyāpati who has mentioned the king in his books. The inscription gives a definite date of Narasiṃhadeva, and hence impliedly it affords a reliable date for Vidyāpati for the first time.

Site

Kandahā is a village in the district of Bhagalpur, subdivision Madhepurā, 8 miles west from the railway station Saharsa on the Bengal North-Western Railway.

The record is inscribed on two vertical bars of the stone-frame of the door of a temple dedicated to a Sun image called Bhavāditya. The temple has been rebuilt; the original image which is in black stone is still *in situ*, and so is the door-frame which is of the same material.

Discovery

Pandit Vishṇu Lal Śāstrī, our Pandit conducting search for manuscripts in Mithilā, had been instructed by me to make note of, and report to me, if any, inscriptions were existing in Mithilā. He discovered the record, and the staff of the Patna Museum took the impression last year.

Object of the inscription

The temple of the Sun was made, according to the inscription, under the orders of the King Śrī Narasiṃhadeva, by a learned man named Vaṃśadhara, of the family of Vilvapañcha which is identical with the Brahmin

[1] On the history of Mithilā see previous papers in this Journal, IX. 300; X. 37; X. 47; XIII. 296; XIV. 311.

family now called Belauñche in Mithilā. V a r d h a m ā n a, the jurist of Mithilā, also belonged to this family.

The inscription begins on the due right, three lines being engraved on it and the other three lines on the opposite bar. The area covered on the right side of the jamb is 4′ 1″ × 4½″ and on the left 3′ 1″ × 4½″. The average length and height of the letters are 1¼″ and 1½″. The letters show that the present Maithilī script has not changed much in the last five centuries. One of the very few features of the change is the position of the dot to the *rakāra*. It is placed, in the inscription, in the middle of the triangle, while it is given below the letter at present. No distinction between *b* and *v* was made, similar to the present practice.

The inscription

The name of the second king of the line is peeled off leaving the letters . . . . r a s i ṃ h a d e v a. I have supplied the missing part of the name—one letter [H a]—from manuscriptions, where H a r a s i ṃ h a - d e v a , father of N a r a s i ṃ h a d e v a and son of B h a v a-s i ṃ h a d e v a , occurs. The genealogy found in the inscription is of three kings beginning with B h a v a s i ṃ h a d e v a:

Genealogy

Bhavasiṃhadeva
|
[Ha]rasiṃhadeva
|
Narasiṃhadeva.

B h a v a s i ṃ h a d e v a was black in complexion. The author of the verses of the inscription says that though the person of the king was like that of Śesha ('the king of poisonous serpents'), his fame was white. The second king, his son, [H a] r a s i ṃ h a d e v a was a thinker in sacerdotal ceremonies, and the third, 'the donor,' king N a r a s i ṃ h a-d e v a was a warrior, and a follower of the political theory of Maya. Maya is cited in the *Kāmandaka* [viii. 20], but his work has not yet been recovered.

The composer of the verses, which are four in number, was C h a n d r a, a *Budha-pāṭakīya*. We know from the mediaeval inscriptions that *pāṭaka* is a territorial designation for a tract of land. Its modern equivalent,

Composer

as suggested by Rai Bahadur Hiralal, is *wār* and *wāṛā*. This is confirmed by the modern Maithila term, *Budhwāre*, a Brahmin family designation, which seems to be the modern representative of *Budha-pāṭakīya*, of *Budha-pāṭaka*.'

I give below the transcript :

Line 1. पृथ्वीपति-द्विजवरो भव [सिंह आ]सीदाशीविषेन्द्र-वपुरुज्वल कीर्त्तिराशिः। तस्यात्मजः सकल-कृत्य-विचार-धीरो वीरो (ब)भूव वि

Line 2. [. . .] रसिंहदेव [: ॥] (१). [दोः ?]-स्तम्भ-द्वय-निर्जिता-हित-नृप-श्रेणी-किरीटोपल-ज्योत्स्नावर्धित-पा

Line 3. द-पल्लव-नख-श्रेणी-मयुखावलिः। दाता तत्तनयो मयोक्तविधिना-भूमण्डलं

Line 4. पालयन् धीरः श्रीनरसिंह-भूप-तिलकः कान्तोधुना राजते ॥ (२). निदेशतोस्यायतनं रवे-

Line 5. -रिदमचीकरत्। विल्वपञ्चकुलोद्भूतः श्रीमद्वंशधरः कृती ॥ (३). ज्येष्ठे मासि शकाब्दे शराश्व-

Line 6. मदनाङ्कितेस्य गिरा। [बु]धपाटकीयचन्द्रः कृतवानेतानि पद्यानि ॥ (४).

Translation

Line 1. "The excellent Brahmin B h a v a s i ṃ h a was king. His body was like that of the king of poisonous serpents (i.e. black) but he was a collection of white fame. H i s s o n, a thinker in respect of all the rites, and a brave man, was.

Line 2. . . . . [H a] r a s i ṃ h a d e v a . (Lines 2 and 3) H i s s o n , the donor, is he, the rays of the nails of whose petal-like feet, were increased in lustre by the rays of the precious stones on the diadems of unfriendly rulers conquered by his two pillar-like arms. (Lines 3 and 4) He protects the province according to the system declared by *Maya* ; he, the grave Ś r ī N a r a s i ṃ h a, the forehead-mark (*tilaka*) of kings, the handsome one, is at present ruling. By the order of his this temple of the S u n (Line 5) is made by the learned and illustrious V a ṃ ś a d h a r a , born in the family of Vilvapañcha. In the month of Jyeshṭha, in the Śaka year figur-

ing as five-seven (Line 6) and thirteen (=1357 Ś.) by the order of the latter, C h a n d r a of Budhapāṭaka has composed these verses."

Calculation of the date

The date is peculiarly worded. The chronogram is *Sarāśva-Madana*. *Sara* denotes five and *aśva*, seven; and *Madana*, thirteen. Following the rule *aṅkānāṃ vāmato gatiḥ*, "figures' movement is leftwards," the chronogram should be deciphered to be 1375 and not 1357. We, however, know from a contemporary chronogram given by Vidyāpati (*JBORS*. xiii., 297, 299) where ja (5)—ve (2) (in his *pakkha-pañhca-ve ja-ve* 252+52=304 L.S.) reads the other way.

The reason why I do not read the chronogram as 1375 is as follows. We have two contemporary dates for D h ī r a s i ṃ h a H ṛ i d a y a N ā r ā y a ṇ a, son and successor of *Narasiṃhadeva*, which are given in Lakshmaṇa-sena years in manuscripts written in his reign: 321[2] and 327,[3] La. Saṃ. Now according to the reckoning current at present in Mithilā La. Saṃ. is obtained by deducting 515[4] years from the current San (Fasli), the present year (1934 A.D. being La. Saṃ. 826). This system of counting

2 A copy of the *Setu-darpaṇī*, a commentary on the *Setu-bandha* was made in the year 321 of King Lakṣmaṇasena while King Dhīrasiṃha was ruling over Mithilā. The MS. was discovered by Mm. Haraprasad Śāstrī; *JASB*., XI. 426, n. [Rai Bahadur M. Chakravarti wrongly stated that the king's viruda was *Kaṃsa Nārāyaṇa*; the text does not justify the assumption. रिपुराजकंसनारायस्स is only a description which is rendered by Lakṣmīnātha as संग्रामे रिपुराज-कंस-दलन-प्रत्यचनारायण: (*JASB*., XI. 426). The king's second name was Hṛidaya Nārāyaṇa: See Grierson, *IA*., 1885 p. 196; 1899, p. 58, who is confirmed by the MS. published by me in *JBORS*., X. p. 47.

3 *JBORS*., X. 47.

4 सन तर शून्य-बाण-षट देव। मीजाँ दय सम्बत् ऽभिलेव ॥
बाण-नैनहर-इन्दु समेता। सम्बत् कमीदिये हो जयता ॥
सो शाके जानहु दृढ़मान। गुरु ज्ञानीजन भाषा भान ॥
जो सन जहां रहे सो देखहु। शर-शशि-बाण हीन कय लेखहु ॥
बाँकी रहे लसं परमान। गुरु ज्ञानीजन भाषा भान ॥

arose about 1750 A.D., when the dates, both old and new, in L.S. were converted by subtracting 515 years from the lunar, Muhammadan Faslī year (see below). But the earlier reckoning in L.S. was luni-solar, and the earlier dates in manuscripts (see below) yield near about 1119 A.D. as the initial date for L.S. According to the calculation of Kielhorn the initial year of L.S. fell in 1119 A.D. The difference between that and the present calculation is of 11 years, and it would be a natural difference if the years were taken like the Hijri years as purely lunar years. The known date of Dhīrsiṃha, viz. 321 La. Saṃ., in either case, will be either 1429 A.D. or 1440 A.D. (according to the ancient reckoning). And if we take the date in the present inscription to be 1375 Śaka, it would be 1453 A.D., i.e. at least 13 years after the date of Narasiṃha's son Dhīrasiṃha. Hence we have to accept the other interpretation: *Śarāśva*=57, i.e. not 1375 but 1357 Ś. =1435 A.D.

It seems that at that time the chronograms were taken in groups of two figures; those two members were read *vāmato*, but *inter se* each group was read ordinarily e.g. five-seven to be 57, not 75. This is exactly the figure-chronogram already ascertained to have been employed in at least one case, in which it was possible to verify it and find out the true system, Vidyāpati having mentioned two contemporary Muhammadan kings (*JBORS.*, xiii. 297, 299). The confusion which exists in the other dates found in Vidyāpati's songs etc. might be attempted to be solved in the light of that system.

The Kandaha Inscription of King Narasimhadeva